

The Honorable Mike Johanns, Secretary

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August 24, 2007

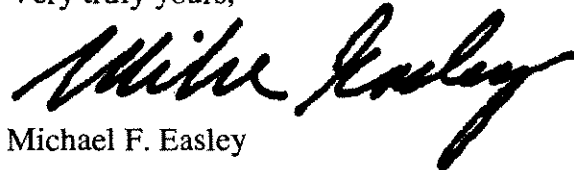
August is on track to be the hottest month ever recorded in North Carolina, and rainfall in some communities is 50 to 75 percent below normal for this time of year. A majority of the state's counties are now experiencing severe to exceptional drought, with stream flows and groundwater levels approaching the record lows set by the 2002 drought in some areas. Estimates indicate the state would need more than 15 inches of rainfall during the next six months to return to adequate levels. However, weather forecasters say there is no significant rainfall expected in the near future.

A disaster designation is the first step toward making the federal Emergency Credit Loan program available to North Carolina's farmers who are suffering due to the drought. To expedite your consideration of this request, I have requested the State Emergency Board of the North Carolina Food and Agricultural Council to obtain USDA Potential Natural Disaster Damage Assessment Reports from the affected counties. I would appreciate any additional steps your office can take to issue this designation swiftly and make assistance available to our farmers.

If there is anything further my office can do to help expedite this process, I encourage your staff to call Jennifer Bumgarner at 919-715-0961.

With kindest regards, I remain

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Easley", written in a cursive style.

Michael F. Easley

MFE: mrl

c: North Carolina Congressional Delegation  
Commissioner Steve Troxler, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Mr. Keith H. Weatherly, North Carolina State Farm Service Agency Office